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SENSITIVE

INL FOR PATTERSON, VERVILLE, PFORZHEIMER, CLINE
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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN-UNODC SYMPOSIUM ON ADVANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
UN CT STRATEGY

(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 17-18, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Government of Austria, and the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General co-sponsored a symposium on "Advancing the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" in Vienna. 103 Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, and UN agencies that are members of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) participated in the symposium. Member States were unanimous in their condemnation of terrorism and in support for strengthening efforts to facilitate implementation of the UN CT strategy. However, they also urged the secretariat to improve coordination with them and transparency of the CTITF. Austrian Minister of Justice Maria Berger set a tone critical of U.S. CT policies, deploring the practice of extrajudicial measures that ostensibly violate human rights, including secret detention facilities, torture to extract confessions, and renditions to countries known to torture suspects. Sweden, Cuba and Iran continued some of these same themes, at times explicitly criticizing the U.S. for Guantanamo and Iraq. Cuba and

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Venezuela criticized the U.S. for its ostensible failure to implement international conventions in relation to the Posada case, which the U.S. rejected in a response.

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END SUMMARY.

U.S. HIT ON HUMAN RIGHTS, IRAQ, POSADA

2. (SBU) During a May 17-18 symposium on advancing implementation of the UN CT strategy, co-sponsored by the Austrian Government, UNODC, and the Executive Office of the Secretary General, Member States unanimously condemned terrorism and agreed on the need to strengthen efforts, both their own and through UN entities, to facilitate implementation of the strategy. Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) delegations repeated their usual arguments about purported distinctions between terrorism and national liberation, and attacked Israel for "state terrorism." A number of countries keyed in on the importance of observing human rights in implementing CT measures, launching into implicit and explicit criticism of the U.S. Austrian Justice Minister Maria Berger cited the March report by the human rights organization Helsinki Federation, condemning extrajudicial measures carried out in Europe, North America, Central Asia and elsewhere, including secret detention of suspects, torture to extract confessions, and renditions to countries known to torture suspects.

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3. (SBU) Swedish Counter-Terrorism Ambassador Cecilia Ruthstrem-Ruin picked up on this theme, calling for the urgent closure of the U.S. facilities at Guantanamo Bay. Iran and Cuba joined in this criticism, accusing the U.S. of further inflaming and worsening the situation with terrorism through the conflict in Iraq. Cuba and Venezuela condemned the U.S. for failing to live up to its obligations under the universal counter-terrorism instruments by not extraditing terrorism suspect Luis Posada-Carriles, and called the US a "safe haven" for terrorism. In response to the latter statements, UNVIE Ambassador Gregory ScQlte clarified the US position on the Posada case (based on points provided by L, S/CT, and IO), insisting that the U.S. was living up to its obligations, and acting in accordance with the rule of law.

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TASK FORCE AND CTED

5. (SBU) Throughout the meeting, delegations appealed to the secretariat, represented by Assistant Secretary General Robert Orr, who currently heads up the CTITF, for greater transparency about its current and future activities as well as better coordination in the pursuit of initiatives. A number of delegations asked about mechanisms to facilitate such coordination and allow Member States to guide the work of the CTITF, but Orr assiduously avoided addressing this in his remarks. During a May 18 dinner hosted by Amb Schulte, Orr noted that the symposium served as such a mechanism for transparency and coordination.

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Orr noted that while the President of General Assembly will lead the 2008 review of the implementation of the Strategy, the CTITF would consider ways to feed into that process over the next year, including by drafting a report on CTITF activities. During the symposium, Stelzer suggested the need for a follow-on meeting, also in Vienna, to further review CTITF progress in implementation, to be held in the autumn of 2007.

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COMMENT

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7. (SBU) Despite some statements containing anti-U.S. rhetoric, which the Austrian Chair carefully managed to avoid in his proposed summary of the proceedings for the record, the symposium proved to be a useful venue to learn more about the status of the UN Counter-Terrorism Task Force.

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